



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

PO Box 47990 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7990

January 10, 2007

TO: Washington State Board of Health Members

FROM: Dr. Patricia Ortiz, Board Member

SUBJECT: VISION SCREENING

Background and Summary

In April 2005, the Legislature enacted Substitute House Bill 1951, which requires the Department of Health (DOH) to convene a work group to reevaluate visual screening of children in public schools and make recommendations regarding changes to the rules. The work group was directed to consider, at a minimum: (1) the benefits of complete eye exams on public school children; (2) when visual screening, complete eye exams, or both should take place in preschool or kindergarten through high school to ensure children are prepared to learn; and (3) what screening techniques would be appropriate in a school setting. The bill states that DOH should produce a report in consultation with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the Board, the Optometric Physicians of Washington, and the Washington Academy of Eye Physicians and Surgeons.

The work group has met for almost two years. It comprises representatives from DOH, the Board, OSPI, the School Nurse Organization of Washington, pediatric ophthalmology, and pediatric optometry. DOH has produced a final report to submit to the Legislature. The work group provided a preliminary report to the Board on December 7, 2005. Final recommendations were due to the Legislature and the Board by December 1, 2006. Today, I have invited Beth Siemon from DOH to present the final report to the Board as required by the bill.

Board Action Recommended

The Board may wish to consider, amend if necessary, and adopt the following motion:

Motion: The Washington State Board of Health accepts the report "Visual Screening of Children in Public Schools – Final Report" and endorses the recommendations it contains.